

The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

BULLETIN FORTY-SIX

WINTER, 1954

THE CENTENNIAL OF WALDEN . . .

1954 marks the centennial of the publication of Thoreau's masterpiece and already plans are under way in many directions for its commemoration:

The plans for our annual meeting in Concord next July are announced below by our president.

The Grolier Club of New York City plans a special meeting on Feb. 16. Your secretary will be the speaker of the evening. The meeting will open an exhibition devoted to great American nature writers.

Concord Free Public Library is to hold an exhibition of illustrations from WALDEN from June 5 to July 17. They would be grateful if anyone owning illustrations used in any edition of WALDEN would lend them to the library for the duration of the exhibition. (% Mr. David Little, Concord Free Public Library, Concord, Mass.)

We understand that several of our leading magazines are planning special articles on WALDEN. We are grateful to Frederic Babcock of the CHICAGO TRIBUNE for having conducted a one-man campaign reminding the editors of these magazines of the centennial.

The first special publication of the centennial year was your secretary's CHECK LIST OF THE EDITIONS OF WALDEN, which was released by the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia on Jan. 1. The second was Goodspeed's Book Shop's limited edition of a facsimile of Thoreau's survey of Walden Pond. We understand that at least one publisher is planning a centennial edition of WALDEN and several other publications are in the air.

THE ANNUAL MEETING R.A.

The 1954 meeting of the Thoreau Society has an inevitable topic: the centennial of the publication of Walden. The meeting itself on July 10 will be a focus of discussions of Walden as a book which the society plans for the two days preceeding the meeting. Scholars, literary critics, naturalists are being invited. A limited number of them will meet on July 8 and 9 for a conference with no more definition than that problems and values of the book be discussed. The definition will come on Saturday when the conclusions are brought in to the public meeting of the society. Predictions are out of order, but the findings should at last result in statements worth publication in a kind of Festschrift. Various members of the society will have plenty of chance to help toward the success of the centennial project.

IN MEMORIAM: FRANCIS H. ALLEN . . .

It is with a deep feeling of personal grief that we note the death of Francis H. Allen, 87, on October 24, 1953. Mr. Allen's editorial work and writing on Thoreau speaks for itself. He set standards which few have duplicated. His presence at many of our annual meetings was a pleasure for all.

CONCORD SKETCHES BY MARY C. WHEELER. . .

We are indebted to our vice-president, Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, for having photostated for our use three unpublished sketches from the notebook of Mary C. Wheeler. Miss Wheeler was the daughter of Abiel Wheeler (who is occasionally mentioned in Thoreau's Journals) and was later the founder of a successful girls' school in Providence. These sketches were done in 1862, the year of Thoreau's death, when Miss Wheeler was 16. There are 14 sketches in her little sketch-book, but we are reproducing only three of particular Thoreau interest: (1) the summer-house which Thoreau and Alcott built for Emerson; (2) the pencil factory; and (3) the Minot House, showing the old woodshed where Thoreau loved to sit with old George Minot and listen to his stories.



We have long suspected that WALDEN was much more widely reviewed when it was published in 1854 than is generally thought. And so, as we have had time, we have checked through some of the periodicals of that time. Two of our discoveries we have already reprinted in the bulletin (from the PROVIDENCE (R.I.) JOURNAL of August 11, 1854 in BULLETIN 16 and from the ANTI-SLAVERY STANDARD of Dec. 16, 1854 in BULLETIN 38). We are now able to add several more, although we are sure we have not yet exhausted the supply. We hope that some of our members may turn up others in this the centennial year of WALDEN's publication.

SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER, XX (September 1854), 575:

A large class of readers will be pleased by the fresh rural scenes and descriptions of Mr. Thoreau, and his volume is a delightful companion for a loll under the rustling leaves of some old oak, far in the country. He paints rural scenes and habits, works and pleasures with a gusto most refreshing. The book is published in the uniform style of Messrs. Ticknor and Fields, and is very handsome. We commend it to our readers.

NATIONAL MAGAZINE, V (September, 1854), 284-5:

I have just fallen upon a proof-sheet of a new work, now in the press of Ticknor & Co., which is so cooling and refreshing in the glaring blaze of this high summer day, that I cannot resist the temptation to copy it. It is from Thoreau's "Walden; or, Life in the Woods." The author is a resident of Concord, Massachusetts, and a neighbor, and, as can readily be imagined, a friend of Mr. Emerson. Some time since, he built himself a hut in the woods, and retired to it for two years that he might hold undisturbed communion with nature. And he seems to have passed through her objective covering into her very subjective life. The extract might be appropriately entitled "Morning." Thus he discourses:--

[He then quotes the 14th and 15th paragraphs from the second chapter of WALDEN.]

GRAHAM'S MAGAZINE, XLV (September, 1854), 298-300:

Whatever may be thought or said of this curious volume, nobody can deny its claims to individuality of opinion, sentiment, and expression. Sometimes strikingly original, sometimes merely eccentric and odd, it is always racy and stimulating. The author, an educated gentleman, disgusted with the compliances and compromises which society enjoins on those to whom it gives "a living," goes off alone into Concord woods, builds his own house, cooks his own victuals, makes and mends his own clothes, works, reads, thinks as he pleases, and writes this book to chronicle his success in the experiment. Mr. Thoreau, it is well known, belongs to the class of transcendentalists who lay the greatest stress on the "I," and knows no limitation on the exercise of the rights of that important pronoun. The customs, manners, occupations, religion, of society, he "goes out" from, and brings them before his own inward tribunal for judgment. He differs from all mankind with wonderful composure; and

without any of the fuss of the come-outers, goes beyond them in asserting the autocracy of the individual. Making himself the measure of truth, he is apt to think that "difference from me is the measure of absurdity;" and occasionally he obtains a startling paradox, by the simple inversion of a stagnant truism. He likes to say that four and four makes nine, in order to assert his independence of the contemptible trammels of the world's arithmetic. He has a philosophical fleer and gibe for most axioms, and snaps his fingers in the face of the most accredited proprieties and "do-me-goodisms" of conventional life. But if he has the wildness of the woods about him, he has their sweetness also. Through all the addacities of his eccentric protests, a careful eye can easily discern the movement of a powerful and accomplished mind. He has evidently read the best books, and talked with the best people. His love for nature, and his eye for nature, are altogether beyond the ordinary love and insight of nature's priests; and his descriptions have a kind of De Foe-like accuracy and reality in their eloquence, peculiar to himself among all American writers. We feel, in reading him, that such a man has earned the right to speak of nature, for he has taken her in all moods, and given the same "frolic welcome" to her "thunder and her sunshine."

But we doubt it anybody can speak so well of Mr. Thoreau as Mr. Thoreau himself. He has devoted so much of his life to the perusal of his own consciousness, that we feel it would be a kind of impertinence to substitute our impressions for his knowledge. We will first extract his account of his expenses for eight months in his woodland home:--

[He then quotes Thoreau's expense account from WALDEN.]

As the article of good, put down at \$8.74, is unaccompanied by the items thereof, we subjoin them in order that our readers may see on how little a philosopher can live:--

[He then quotes Thoreau's itemized food list.]

One of the great trials of authors and sages has its source in the necessity of being clothed. Mr. Thoreau has discussed this matter with unusual sagacity, and what thinker, after reading the following, can mourn over the fact of being out at the elbows:--

[He then quotes two paragraphs on clothes from the first chapter of WALDEN.]

In a description of his visitors, occurs the following testimonial to a Concord philosopher, who occasionally penetrated to his residence. Although the name is not given, we suppose Mr. Thoreau refers to A. Bronson Alcott:--

[He then quotes two paragraphs on Alcott from the chapter on "Winter Visitors."]

Here is a defense of individualism, in its large sense in which Mr. Thoreau uses it:

[He then quotes the paragraph from "Higher Laws" beginning, "If one listens to."]

The volume is so thickly studded with striking descriptions that it is difficult to select an average specimen of Mr. Thoreau's power and felicity. We take the following as one of the best:--

[He then quotes the first two paragraphs of "Baker Farm."]

We fear that our extracts have not done justice to the attractiveness of this curious and original volume. We might easily fill a page with short, sharp, quotable sentences, embodying some flash of wit or

humor, some scrap of quaint or elevated wisdom, or some odd or beautiful image. Every chapter in the book is stamped with sincerity. It is genuine and genial throughout. Even its freaks of thought are full of suggestions. When the author turns his eye seriously on an object, no matter how remote from the sphere of ordinary observation, he commonly sees into it and through it. He has a good deal of Mr. Emerson's piercing quality of mind, which he exercises on the more elusive and flitting phenomena of consciousness, with a metaphysician's subtilty, and a poet's expressiveness. And as regards the somewhat presumptuous manner in which he dogmatizes, the reader will soon learn to pardon it for the real wealth of individual thinking by which it is accompanied, always remembering that Mr. Thoreau, in the words of his own motto, does not intend to write an "ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake his neighbors up."

THE ANNUAL ELECTION

Nominations for the offices of president, vice-president, secretary-treasurer, and positions on the executive committee should be sent to the secretary. Present holders of those officers are automatically renominated. If new nominations are received, ballots will be sent out with the spring bulletin; if no new nominations are received, the present office holders will be declared elected at the annual meeting. The spring bulletin will probably not be mailed out until late May or June so that full details of the July meeting may be given.

WALDEN'S TITLES

The title of Thoreau's second book was fixed in the author's mind when he announced it in the book he published in 1849. It was to be Walden: or, Life in the Woods. And so it was titled in 1854. But in the next printing and in every edition for nearly 40 years it was simply Walden. Osgood, Houghton, Osgood & Co., and Houghton Mifflin Co. used the longer title in their advertisements; but the title pages contained the one-word title. In 1884 the first British edition used the longer title on the paper label on the spine of the book, but the title page still said simply Walden. In 1893 Houghton, Mifflin & Co. returned the 1854 title to the title page, and it has been there pretty constantly ever since. One of the condensed versions of the book (the Simple Life Press edition of 1904) changes the title to the first person and calls it Walden: My Life in the Woods. R.A.

(Editor's Note: As I have noted in my recent CHECK-LIST OF WALDENS (p. ix), there is in Huntington Library the manuscript of a letter from Thoreau to his publisher, dated March 4, 1862, requesting that they drop "or, Life in the Woods" from the title of all future editions.)

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY . . .

We are happy to call to the attention of our members the work of the Wilderness Society (1840 Mintwood Place, N.W., Washington 9, D.C.). This society is devoted to the conservation of our natural resources and the preservation of our little remaining wilderness. They publish THE LIVING WILDERNESS, a periodical. Quite appropriately their official stationery is labeled, "In Wilderness is the Preservation of the World--Thoreau."

GRAB BAG . . .

In checking through his files, your secretary has discovered that through the years he has accumulated a tremendous number of duplicates of clippings of newspaper and magazine articles pertaining to Thoreau. He will gladly send along an unsorted group of these to anyone who is keeping a Thoreau file or scrapbook who will send him postage to cover mailing. He also finds he has duplicates of the following articles by himself, which he will send under the same circumstances (if anyone thinks they are worth the postage): "Two Sanborn Letters," "Thoreau and the Negro," "Thoreau, Philologist," "Thoreau" (from WORD), "The Significance of Thoreau's WALDEN," and several others. He also has a few copies left of Ira Hoover's pamphlet on the 1917 centennial of Thoreau and of L.M. Alcott's "Thoreau's Flute." Help yourself so long as the supply lasts.

THOREAU'S PROFESSOR HAS HIS SAY . . . WH

C. C. Felton was professor of Greek literature at Harvard College while Thoreau was a student there. Some years later Prof. Felton was asked to write a review of Henry William Herbert's translation of THE PROMETHEUS AND AGAMEMNON OF AESCHYLUS for the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW. He responded with a lengthy 14-page article, in the midst of which he says in passing about his old student:

There has been one translation of the Prometheus Fettered published in this country before Mr. Herbert's. It was written for that whimsical and short-lived monthly--the Dial--by Mr. Henry Thoreau, a scholar of talent, but of such pertinent oddity in literary matters, that his writings will never probably do him any justice. This translation was executed with ability, but not being in the poetical form, is scarcely subject to criticism as a work of art, and cannot be brought into any fair comparison with Mr. Herbert's. (NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, LXIX, 414. October, 1849).

Prof. Felton, we are afraid, made several errors of fact. THE DIAL was a quarterly, not a monthly, and Thoreau's translation was in verse--although we must admit a very free verse. And as to Prof. Felton's judgment--we'll leave that to you.

THOREAU JOTTINGS

Mr. John Cooley of Pleasantville, N.Y., has recently acquired a manuscript survey of the John Thoreau house lot on Main Street, dated March 30, 1858. The house is indicated in outline. Thoreau also placed the fruit trees, including "My Baldwin from Texas," meaning, of course, the Texas House.

Wendell Glick delivered a paper on "The Native Background of Thoreau's Early Radical Thought" at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association in Chicago in December.

Robert Cobb is writing a dissertation at the University of Michigan on "Society vs. Solitude in the American Renaissance: Studies in Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman."

The Chiswick Book Shop of New York City recently listed a set of the Manuscript Edition of Thoreau with "colored photographs." It is the first case we have heard of of colored photographs in this edition, and we suspect they must have been especially hand-colored for this set.

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY .WH

Ballou, Adin. "On Seeing Thoreau's Stove"
N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE. Dec. 15, 1953.
A poem.
Bode, Carl. "Thoreau and His Last Publishers." NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY, XXVI (Sep. 1953), 383-7. Unpublished letters from Thoreau to Ticknor & Fields.
_____. "Thoreau the Author." AMERICAN QUARTERLY, V (Fall, 1953), 247-52. "T. satisfies the idea of Withdrawal and Return more richly and variously for our native culture than does any other American."

Dias, Earl J. "Daniel Ricketson and Henry Thoreau." NEW ENGLAND QUARTERLY, XXVI (Sept. 1953), 388-96. On their friendship.

Durfee, Hazard. "Henry David Thoreau on Individuality." FORTUNE. Dec. 1953. p.148. A full-page colored illustration of Thoreau playing his flute, with a text from WALDEN. One of the Container Corporation of America's series of "Great Ideas of Western Man." Probably reprinted in other magazines.

Gray, Leonard. "Thoreau's Reading." CONCORD ENTERPRISE. Dec. 31, 1953. p.8. A lengthy discussion of T's reading, concluding that "his reading and his living and his writing were closely interrelated and interwoven."

Hale, Philip. "Lost--a Hound, a Bay Horse and a Turtle Dove." BOSTON HERALD. Jan. 3 (?), 1918 (?). A discussion of the famous passage in WALDEN.

A CENTENNIAL CHECK-LIST OF THE EDITIONS OF HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S WALDEN. By Walter Harding (Charlottesville: U. of Va. Press for the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1954) 32pp. tall 8vo, cl. \$2.50.

The modest cover of the Harding checklist is deceptive. The severely plain cloth binding, in color somewhere between quaker gray and Walden blue -- a combination Thoreau would have liked, covers a book that is as complete as careful scholarship and indefatigable collecting can make it. Readers of the Thoreau Society Bulletin need not be told that Walter Harding leaves no unconsidered trifle out of his consideration nor any overlooked bit of Thoreauana anywhere in the world overlooked longer than it takes to get an investigatory letter there. Here is completeness and accuracy. It is a checklist, so the books listed are not collated; nor are titles of each item printed, so the slight variations in word or punctuation among titles of Walden are not recorded. It might have been better to have omitted separate printings of short selections from Walden. And one might quibble that anthologies of Thoreau writings which include even the entire text of Walden are not editions of Walden. But no one will quibble about a checklist that includes all the Waldens there have ever been and then adds these other things for good measure. Particularly, no one will quibble when he can praise a book as well compiled and as well printed as this one.

R.A.

Hellman, George S. "Unpublished Pages of Henry D. Thoreau." BOSTON HERALD. 1909? -1910? Long quotations from unpublished manuscripts.

Kane, Edward H. "Thoreau's Words Warn Legislators." BOSTON GLOBE. Jan. 4 (?), 1954. Letter to editor citing passage from T. on legislators.

M., W.G. "Migrants." CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR. Oct. 26, 1953. A poem on T.

McGrail, Thomas H. "A Thought on Thoreau." Unidentified English-language Haifa, Israeli newspaper. Dec. 4, 1953. Announcing that a Hebrew translation of

WALDEN is in the process.

Oliver, Egbert S. "Thoreau Finds the Dawn in Asia." KOREAN SURVEY, II (Nov. 1953) 6,7,10. "The Orient became part of T's life, thought, and expression."
Paul, Sherman. "Resolution at Walden." ACCENT, XIII (Spring, 1953), 101-113. On symbolism in WALDEN.
Ritchell, Rella. "Thoreau--July 12, 1943" in SCARS AND OTHERS. (Walden Press, 1953). A poem.

Scudder, Townsend. "Henry David Thoreau" in LITERARY HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES. New York: Macmillan, 1953. \$6.75. A new edition.

Teale, Edwin Way. CIRCLE OF THE SEASONS. (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1953). An account of a Thoreau Society meeting and many quotations from Thoreau are included in this delightful series of extracts from Mr. Teale's journals.

Thoreau, Henry David. A WALDEN CALENDAR. Waterville, Me., Carl and Clara Weber, 1953. A calendar for 1954 with quotations from WALDEN for each month.

*. DIE WELT UND ICH. Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1951. 321pp. Extracts from the diaries, works and letters of Thoreau, translated by Fritz Krokkel.

_____. JOURNALS. Review of. North, Sterling. WASHINGTON POST. June 17, 1951.

_____. "A Plea for Captain John Brown." MASSES AND MAINSTREAM, VI (Oct. 1953), 46-50. An abridged version.

_____. SURVEY OF WALDEN POND. Boston: Goodspeed, 1954. A beautiful collotype facsimile reproduction of T's hitherto unpublished manuscript survey of Walden Pond, showing the location of the cabin, and with many comments by Thoreau. It is issued in a limited edition and would grace any room if framed. \$3.50.

_____. UBER DIE FREUDSCHAFT. Aschaffenburg, Paltlock, 1946. The essay on friendship translated into German by Paul Paltlock.

Very, Jones. "On Visiting the Graves of Hawthorne and Thoreau." in POEMS AND ESSAYS. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1886, p. 519). An apparently hitherto unnoticed poem on Thoreau by his personal friend and Greek tutor at Harvard.

Wheeler, Ruth Robinson. THE CONCORD FRIENDLY AID SOCIETY. Concord: privately printed, 1950. 12pp. A history with much about the charitable activities of Thoreau's mother and an excellent background picture of Concord in Thoreau's day.

We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: R.Adams, F.Babcock, T.Bailey, C.Bode, L.Chirin, W.Conant, G.Genzer, L.Gray, G.Hendrick, C.Hoagland, G.Hosmer, L.Kleinfield, N.Lehrman, R.Ritchell, W.Sutton, A.Wesley, R.Wheeler, and H.Zahniser. Please keep the secretary informed of new items and of errors and omissions.

The Thoreau Society, Inc., is an informal organization of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Membership is open to anyone interested. Fees are one dollar a year; life membership, twenty-five dollars. A price list of back publications may be obtained from the secretary. All material, unless otherwise signed, is compiled by the secretary. Officers of the society are Raymond Adams, Chapel Hill, N.C., president; Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, Concord, Mass., vice-president; and secretary treasurer:

Walter Harding
Room 505 Cabell Hall
Charlottesville, Virginia.